

Nationwide “Publish and Read” Agreements with Publishers : The German Projekt DEAL

Olivia Karin Diehr
Christian Heene

Leibniz Institute for Baltic Sea Research (IOW)
Seestrasse 15, 18119 Rostock, Germany

Abstract

The Projekt DEAL is a consortium of German libraries, universities, and research institutions which started negotiations with the publisher Elsevier in 2016. DEAL wants to set up nationwide “publish and read” agreements with publishers. By paying a lump sum to cover publication costs, all papers authored by researchers from German institutions would be published open access. This new payment model would certainly have a global impact. Besides Elsevier, there are ongoing negotiations with the publishers SpringerNature and Wiley. We will explain the recent developments and open access initiatives, and discuss whether DEAL could be a model for other IAMSLIC libraries.

Keywords: Projekt DEAL, nationwide agreement, consortium, open access, business model.

The goal of Projekt DEAL is to conclude nationwide licensing agreements for the entire portfolio of electronic journals from major academic publishers (Projekt DEAL, 2018). Elsevier, SpringerNature and Wiley were identified as potential publishers.

Project Structure

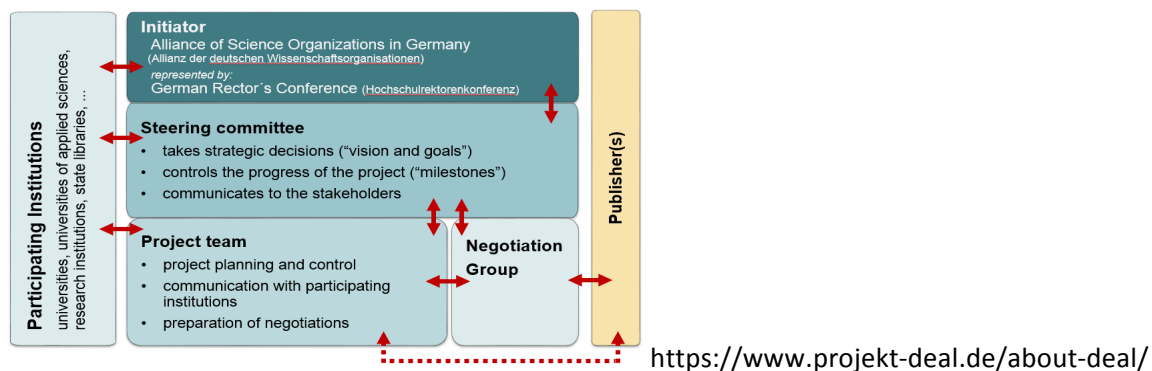


Figure 1. Structure of Projekt DEAL.

Projekt DEAL was initiated by the Alliance of Science Organizations in Germany in 2015. Projekt DEAL is a consortium of German libraries, universities, universities of applied sciences, research institutions, as well as state libraries. To carry out the project, the Alliance has brought together a project team including relevant experts from universities and other institutions. The group will be piloted by a project steering committee. The negotiation group is responsible for negotiations with the publishers.

What is Special about Projekt DEAL?

Nationwide licensing agreements are not new, but what is special about DEAL is the goal to provide “publish and read” agreements. The DEAL consortium members want to establish a new payment model. The pricing should be based on the publishing output of the member institutions, and calculated with an adequate APC, independent of the number of accessible journals.

- **PUBLISH component:** By paying for the publishing output of their scientists, the institutions obtain access to the entire e-journal portfolio of the publisher.
- **READ component:** Furthermore, and maybe the most critical requirement, is that all articles by German based scientists become open access immediately upon publication.

Why Has Projekt DEAL Been Initiated? Why Do We Participate in Projekt DEAL?

Projekt DEAL is embedded in the open access movement. Projekt DEAL is a consequence of both the increasing subscription costs and the progressive open access movement within the last 10 years. Subscription costs have become too expensive and the consortium members are not willing to accept the pricing policy anymore. Only a consortium may be able to obtain a significant change in academic publishing by pushing the publishers to agree to the DEAL’s licensing model.

To understand the project idea and DEAL members’ demands, it is important to look at the researchers’ intentions as well as at hybrid open access. The researcher is in a “publish or perish” situation. It is important for their scientific career to publish their findings. Furthermore, the prestige of the journal is crucial. Well-established prestigious journals are first choice for publishing, but the majority of these journals are subscription-based. Notwithstanding, researchers want their articles open access. Publishers have reacted by offering hybrid open access. Several years ago Springer, Wiley and Elsevier launched hybrid journals and the number of hybrid open access articles has increased. Hybrid Open Access describes a publishing model where some articles are made openly available, while other articles remain closed access, and the journal as a whole subscription-based (Rettberg, 2018). Double dipping means the publisher charges fees twice, once through Articles Processing Charges, and secondly by subscription fees. Double dipping cannot be accepted by public funded German academic institutions. The IOW does not fund APC for hybrid open access. The European Commission (EC) announced that, starting with their new funding programme, Horizon Europe, they will no longer reimburse publication fees for hybrid Open Access.

Content and subscription costs of hybrid journals

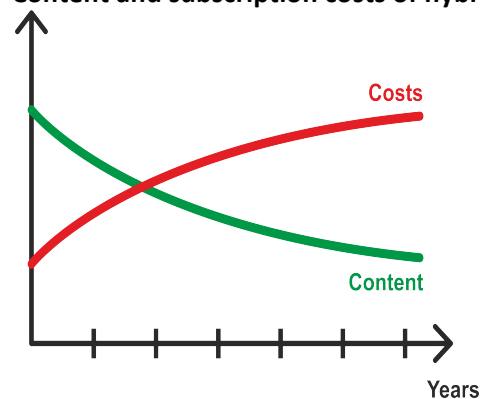


Figure 2. Content and subscription costs of hybrid journals.

The subscription costs are increasing and while the part we need to pay for reading is decreasing, due to the increasing number of hybrid open access articles, there has not been any offset yet. This is one reason for Projekt DEAL.

Timeframe

2014	Preparation
2015	Establishing the project structure Selecting publishers Obtaining negotiation mandates Analysing data
2016	Establishing of the consortium DEAL Start of negotiations with Elsevier
IOW cancelled all Elsevier's journal subscriptions	
2017	January: DEAL's consortium members lost access to Elsevier journals February: Elsevier restored access free of charge -> "Big bang" failed
	Start of negotiations with SpringerNature and Wiley
2018	July: Negotiations with Elsevier have been suspended

Figure 3. Timeframe: (Schäffler, 2017) see <https://www.projekt-deal.de/zeitplan/>

The present situation is unpleasant. Negotiations with Elsevier have been suspended. Since summer 2018 our institution has had no access to Elsevier's journal content published in 2017 and 2018. At present we are offering our scientists access through inter-library loans. Other oceanographic libraries are still on multi-year contracts. The situation will be different soon, when nearly all German academic institutions will lose access. The access to archive was not covered by IOW subscription agreement.

Potential Improvements

Involve the scientists. Talk to and communicate with researchers. They are readers, authors, and editors. Find an appropriate way to explain the aims of Projekt DEAL do it before canceling subscriptions. The lack of information has caused a lack of understanding by our scientists.

Acknowledgements

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